

contributors, and even Federal regulators, this administration has shown a blatant disregard for ethical behavior and the public interest in a democracy.

It would be impossible for me to call attention to all the various scandals unfolding around this administration in a reasonable amount of time. I for one am most concerned with questions pertaining to economic and other forms of espionage on behalf of foreign interests by a host of acknowledged friends and associates of the President. I believe these to be the most serious and most disturbing of the allegations that will ultimately be the focus of the media and the main source of the American people's disgust. But in the case of this administration, it more resembles the old saying "Pick your poison," because there's no telling what may finally be most damaging.

In October 1996 when I started asking questions about Clinton administration policy toward China and Vietnam, I was one of a few who found their associations and behavior suspect. Now, every major newspaper this week has had two and three front-page stories about various indiscretions under President Clinton and by President Clinton. And why is that? It's because there is an unbelievable wealth of information regarding wrongdoing out there. Yet, Attorney General Reno continues to deny the need for an independent counsel. It's hard to believe she's applying the same law we in Congress wrote just for situations like this where it is necessary to remove politics from an investigation. Clearly there is credible evidence of illegal activity and information that links principal figures, that is, President Clinton and Vice President GORE, to these actions.

I urge you, Mr. Speaker, and everyone to take a look at two editorials from the New York Times and the Washington Post on March 5, 1997, that outline another abuse at the hands of the Clinton administration. This one involving speeding up the citizenship process for potential political gain. As you can see from their tone, I'm not the only one who has grown tired of their insatiable political appetite and disrespect for honest government.

The editorials follow:

[From the Washington Post, Mar. 5, 1997]
BURNED AGAIN

On subject after subject, this turns out to be a White House that you believe at your peril. Six months ago, Republicans were accusing it of trying to make political use of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The charge was that the White House had put the arm on the INS to speed up and cut corners in the naturalization process, the theory being that new citizens would more likely vote Democratic than Republican, and therefore the more of them, the merrier.

The administration responded that there was no way it would do a thing like that, manipulate the citizenship process for political gain, and folks believed it. We ourselves wrote sympathetically that, while "some congressional Republicans suspect a Democratic plan to load up the voter rolls . . . the administration replies that there are good and innocent reasons for [the] increase."

So now, guess what? It turns out the White House was in fact leaning on the INS to hasten the process, in part in hopes of creating new Democratic voters. There are documents that amply show as much. The attempt was described in a lengthy account in this newspaper by reporter William Branigin the other day. It was centered in the office of Vice President Gore, where they do reinventing

government projects. But it wasn't just another reinvention. "The president is sick of this and wants action," Elaine Kamarck, a domestic policy adviser to Mr. Gore wrote in an e-mail last March, the "this" being that the INS wasn't moving people along at the proper speed.

The Republican charge is that, in speeding up the process, the INS made citizens of some applicants with criminal records who should have been barred. The Democratic defense—the current version—is that some of this may indeed have occurred, but not because of political interference. Rather, it was the result of simple bungling. You are told now that you shouldn't take the political meddling in this process—essentially a law enforcement process—seriously not because it didn't happen but because it was ineffectual. Now there's a comfort.

The INS has long been an agency in disrepair. It had and still has a huge naturalization backlog, partly the result of increased applications after the grant of amnesty to certain illegal aliens in the immigration act of 1986, partly now the result as well of last year's welfare bill, which cuts off benefits to immigrants who fail to naturalize. The agency was already trying to cut the backlog, as well it should and if ever there were a candidate for reinvention, it's the INS. So you had a legitimate project until the folks with the hot hands in the White House decided it should be a political project as well, at which point it was compromised.

Some of the worst ideas ginned up in the White House never got anywhere, in part apparently because of stout INS resistance. Nor is it yet clear how many people with disqualifying records were made citizens, nor how much of that was due to political pressure and how much to just plain everyday incompetence. But in a way it doesn't matter. What matters is that once again the political people couldn't keep their distance from a process that should have been respected and left alone on decency-in-government grounds, and then they were untruthful about it. Who believes them and goes bail for them next time?

[From the New York Times, Mar. 5, 1997]

THE LAW ACCORDING TO GORE

We salute Vice President Al Gore's decision to come forward and answer questions about his role in the Democrats' unrestrained fund-raising in 1996. But surely Mr. Gore and President Clinton know that the situation is too messy for the American public to accept Mr. Gore's relaxed reading of the Federal law against soliciting money on Federal property.

Mr. Gore argued that the law does not apply to his calls from the White House since he used a credit card supplied by the Democratic National Committee and was not soliciting Federal employees. The Republicans and some legal scholars seem to think the law actually means what it says, and that Mr. Gore broke it. Whatever the final resolution, Mr. Gore's forthright statement about his actions leaves no doubt that Attorney General Janet Reno has the "credible evidence" of possible law-breaking that she needs to appoint an independent counsel.

Of course, plenty more important evidence already exists, and the need for a thorough airing will only grow in the days ahead. Mr. Gore's undignified phone-athon, however demeaning to him and his office, is not the weightiest matter to be explored. What has to be determined is whether illegal foreign contributions were funneled into the President's re-election effort and whether staff members at the White House and the D.N.C. had knowledge or complicity in such an effort. The political and legislative energies of

this Administration will continue to drain away until those questions are answered.

The extent to which Mr. Gore's admission dented his own Presidential hopes cannot be known immediately. What is clear is the utter tackiness and lack of restraint that prevailed within the reelection councils at this White House. Mr. Gore now bids to be remembered as the Vice President who went a clear step beyond what previous Vice Presidents and Presidents were willing to do. Typically, the party's top officeholders appear at fund-raising events and thank contributors in a general way, but they do not do the arm-twisting themselves. It is demeaning and potentially corrupting for a Vice President to ask directly for money, especially from people with business before the government.

Senior business executives called by the Vice President felt they were being shaken down, and they had a right to think so. Such transgressions against propriety have become a recurrent theme with this Administration. Whatever the final adjudication of its conduct, this White House has time and again blurred lines that other Administrations have drawn between politics and government.

After the disclosures that Democratic National Committee officers and staff members were attending White House meetings and receptions, using White House phone logs and offering the Lincoln Bedroom and other perquisites to potential donors, it should perhaps not be surprising that Mr. Gore felt it was all right to sit in his office and call contributors.

Just once we would like to hear of someone within this Administration's inner financial circle who had the strength, self-discipline and taste to say no. Failing that, most people would settle for an independent counsel to check the Vice President's reading of the law and the legality of the entire Democratic fund-raising operation.

IN HONOR OF JAMES AZARIEL
AND SELINA ANASTASIA
BURNETTE

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 6, 1997

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, February 27, wife, Bonnie, and I were blessed with two new grandchildren. Their names are Selina Anastasia and James Azariel Burnett. They are the first children of my daughter, Elizabeth Burnett, and her husband, Fred Burnett.

Bonnie and I join James and Selina's other grandparents, Charles and Bonnie Burnette of Rustburg, VA, in welcoming them to the world.

Selina and James, like my other grandchildren, will have a tough time paying back all the money that the Federal Government is borrowing. If we don't change our ways, they will have to pay \$187,000 each over their lifetimes to cover their share of the interest on the national debt.

I ask all the parents and grandparents now in Congress to work with me to minimize the debt that James, Selina and all the other children and grandchildren will have to pay back. If we continue to overspend, their chances for a good job and a high standard of living will be substantially reduced.